

Field Notes

News from Traditional Arts Indiana

Volume 7, No. 1 December 2005



State Fair Masters, The Piecemakers, quilt together annually at the Indiana State Fair Pioneer Village.
— Photo by Ilze Akerbergs

Quilting Needles and Wine Barrels TAI State Fair Masters 2005

For the fifth year in a row, TAI has partnered with the Indiana State Fair in honoring some of Indiana's finest talents, who have gained reputations within their communities as bearers of traditional knowledge. Their skills range from agriculture, to steer-raising, to candymakers and sheep shearers. This year, the Masters included master winemakers and quilters.

No image speaks more vividly of Indiana's pioneer women than a Hoosier quilting bee. Today, many groups throughout Indiana continue to quilt and visit with each other. Master quilters, *The Piecemakers* from Evansville, have been a staple at the Indiana State Fair Pioneer Village since 1982, demonstrating quilting in this lively setting of colonial America.

Like clockwork, each Wednesday throughout the year, the Piecemakers gather at Salem United Methodist Church to quilt. Some learned to quilt at their mother's knee while others taught themselves. Together, each year they make a quilt for the state fair to be auctioned off, contributing more than 200 hours of shared labor and talent. "Putting a quilt together is an art," explains Jane Eberhart "...putting the colors and designs together and being able to see it in your mind before it actually happens."

Master winemakers, the *Huber Family* from Clark County, have brought the fruit-growing and winemaking tradition with them from Baden Baden, Germany to Southeastern Indiana. Since 1843, the family has been making wine, at first only a couple of barrels a year. In 1972, they decided to enter the commercial market. Today, sixth generation winemakers Ted and Greg oversee a winery, vineyard, orchard, and retail store. A few years ago, Ted's father, Gerald Huber, won the Governor's Cup at the Indiana State Fair's International Wine Competition.



Master winemaker Ted Huber and his two sons, show off the many awards the Huber winery has won for its wines.
— Photo by Jon Kay



Clary Butler, Jr. leads a gospel number with his group "Seven Minutes 'Til Midnight" at TAI Day at the Fair.
— Photo by Ilze Akerbergs

TAI Day at the Fair and Fiddle Contest

The Main Street stage was the setting for a repeat performance by the popular mariachi group from East Chicago, Mariachi Acero. This band originated from the schoolrooms of East Chicago's Central High School more than 15 years ago, led by band instructor Larry Lane. Towards evening, steel guitarist Clary Butler, Jr. and his group "Seven Minutes 'Til Midnight" from Indianapolis roused the state fair audience to its feet with some "sacred steel" music, which is a form of gospel utilizing pedal steel guitars.



Master fiddler Alan Jabbour jams with a young contestant at the TAI State Fair Fiddle Contest.
— Photo by Ilze Akerbergs

In-between performances, accordionist Mike Macchia from Lake County, a master artist in TAI's apprenticeship program, set the audience's toes tapping to "Lady of Spain" and popular polkas.

TAI's third annual *State Fair Fiddle Contest* saw a good crop of old and young fiddle contestants competing for places in three categories. Founding director of the American Folklife Center and master fiddler Alan Jabbour was the guest fiddle performer for the event.



Fiddle-maker Larry Hopkins at Bloomington's Fair on the Square.
— Photo by Jon Kay

TAI at Bloomington's Fair on the Square

TAI partnered with the Bloomington Area Arts Council to bring traditional crafts artists from different parts of Indiana together to demonstrate their art. Among the traditional artists were Larry Hopkins, fiddle and mandolin builder, Daniel Cain, hoop-net maker, Dale Drake, tatter, and Ain Haas, Estonian kannel builder.

TAI State Fair Masters DVD wins award

Free-lance videographer Anders Lund, with support from Bloomington Community Television (CATS), developed a DVD on the Indiana State Fair Masters. This DVD has won the Philo T. Farnsworth Award for Documentary Profile and Promotional Video over 61 Seconds. To obtain a copy of this DVD, contact TAI at (812) 855-0418, or e-mail tradarts@indiana.edu.

Traditional Arts Indiana (TAI) is dedicated to expanding public awareness of Indiana's traditional practices and nurturing a sense of pride among Indiana's traditional artists. TAI, a partnership of the Indiana Arts Commission (IAC) and the Indiana University (IU) Department of Folklore & Ethnomusicology, works locally with individuals

and organizations to promote and facilitate cultural documentation and public programming. The National Endowment for the Arts, the IAC, IU and private donations support the work of TAI. For more information, call (812) 855-0418, <tradarts@indiana.edu> website: <http://www.indiana.edu/~tradarts>

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Fieldworkers 2005: Jon Kay, Ilze Akerbergs, Brent Bjorkman, Butch Ross.



A glassworker in Joe Rice's studio in Madison county forms a paperweight from glass. Joe learned this art from his grandfather.

— Photo by Jon Kay

On the Road . . .

Along the I-69 Heritage Corridor

Through a partnership with the I-69 Heritage Corridor, TAI worked with seven convention and visitor bureaus that line I-69, one of Indiana's major north-south interstates. TAI identified, interviewed, and photographed more than 100 traditional artists in Hamilton, Madison, DeKalb, Huntington, and Grant counties. Funded partly



Jars of honey in the back of beekeeper Utah Rowe's van, waiting to be picked up by customers at the Auburn Farmers Market. — Photo by Ilze Akerbergs

by a Quality of Place grant, this material will be useful in developing folklife and heritage-related activities for tourists. Researchers in the project included Ilze Akerbergs, Brent Bjorkman, Butch Ross, and Jon Kay.

The next phase of the project is to provide training for community scholars and artists in the region and to create online slideshows featuring several of the artists.

This partnership allowed TAI to make the leap into the digital age, by collecting and logging all photos and interviews digitally. Copies of the digital files will be placed at the Indiana Historical Society and Indiana University.



Woodcarver Roger Houser from DeKalb county carving a face of an old man. — Photo by Ilze Akerbergs

From glassmakers and quilters to luthiers and beekeepers, the fieldworkers found that the region was buzzing with creativity. These are just a few images from this survey.



Filipino Americans Norlinda Coney and Judith Haller from DeKalb county display the filipino egg rolls called *lumpia*, that they had just made.

— Photo by Ilze Akerbergs



Rows of maple syrup bottles, each containing a sample of a particular batch of maple syrup collected last spring by Carl Hoffelder from DeKalb county.

— Photo by Ilze Akerbergs

The Rotating Exhibit Project

TAI is giving IU folklore students the opportunity to develop exhibit projects connected with the traditional arts. These exhibits, beautifully mounted on an 8 foot high stand, will rotate to various exhibit areas located in libraries, arts organizations, schools, etc. Organizations interested in hosting some of these exhibits can call the TAI office at

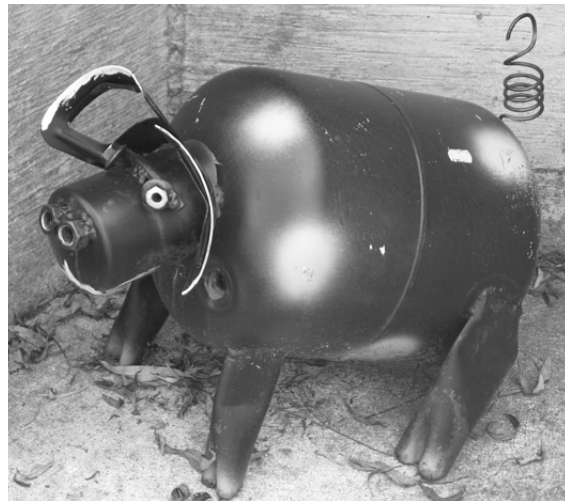


Geoff Davis from Madison county holds a ukelele that he made.

— Photo by Jon Kay

(812) 855-0418, or e-mail tradarts@indiana.edu.

These exhibits feature traditional folk groups and artists, such as rag rug weavers and fiddlers.



Folk sculpture made by quilter Bernice Enyeart's son from Huntington.

— Photo by Butch Ross

From the Field . . .

A visit with dobro player Earl Riser

The following is an excerpt from Ilze Akerberg's fieldnotes describing her visit with 91-year-old dobro, guitar player and singer, Earl Riser. This fieldwork is part of the I-69 Heritage Corridor project.

...I finally arrived at Earl Riser's farmhouse. I drove up quite a bit on unpaved county roads to get to his house. His was a white house, but the last digit in his address had fallen off, so I had to drive a little to and fro to find it. I drove up a little late. An old black dog came up to greet me, not barking at all. I knocked on the back and front door. The back of the house looked quite deserted. He finally came up around the side of the house, leaning on his cane.

He is a big man of 90 years old. He was really friendly. I remembered what Lina said that he was hard of hearing. He had a friendly smile and led me slowly over to the big pond in the back. There was a swing right under the apple tree and lots of small apples scattered on the ground beneath it that had fallen off the tree and begun to rot. He picked up a few rotten apples and threw them into the pond and large fish came up immediately to grab them.



Above: Earl Riser sitting in his garden swing by the pond, playing the dobro.

Right: Earl Riser carrying his dobro.

Below: Close-up of Earl's dobro technique.
— Photos by Ilze Akerbergs



He lamented that the Canadian geese were gone. There had been many dozen the day before, and he described how they would parade in front of him as he was playing the dobro, looking at him. And the birds would just go back and forth and they really loved that. He counted 86 birds one day. They go tell their buddies and even more just keep coming. Earl had a wonderful laugh and stories came out naturally.



We sat for a while in the swing. He had brought out two boxes of old photographs and was going through them, finding ones of his old band the Rhythmic Ramblers, and some old school pictures. Earl talked about various things in his life, the jobs he worked -- welding, tool and dye, and others. He had lived on this farm almost all his life.

It was very peaceful sitting out there by the pond. Almost no traffic went by there, and I totally relaxed and enjoyed the tranquility of the site. What a place to live.

I asked if he could play something on the dobro. He readily agreed and got up to get his dobro. He came back and played a few songs. He was an excellent player, and the dobro sounded wonderfully full under his hands. He sang along with it some gospel and old country songs, a wonderful twang in his voice. He yodeled too, very well. He was especially proud of all the country stars that he had met and gotten to know in his life. Gene Autry was the one that I recognized.



Community musicians playing in the Waterloo Depot Jam Session.
— Photo by Ilze Akerbergs

The Waterloo Depot Jam session

Earl was especially excited about playing in the Waterloo Depot Jam Session. This is an informal monthly musical session that local musician Dwight Zerkle had organized. They meet in Waterloo's old, historic train depot, located right next to the tracks. Every 15 minutes or so, a train would come barreling down the tracks, sounding like deafening thunder, a few feet from the walls of the depot. The small building would shake, and

the dulcimers and guitars would be momentarily drowned out. But nobody was phased. This was a normal background for the session, and everybody just kept on playing. There were 3-4 lap dulcimers. Earl Riser was playing guitar and dobro. George had a dulcitar that he had fashioned himself. He explained later that he had taken a cheap small guitar and changed the strings around so that there were only 4, and he played it in his lap like a dulcimer. So that's why he called this hybrid of guitar and dulcimer a dulcitar. He was a creative thinker, figuring out how to transform something that he already had into something else.

People seemed to be calling out names of tunes and finding them in a specially named notebook, the Waterloo Depot play book. It was a mixture of tablature and real music, of folk songs and country tunes. George sometimes picked up a harmonica and Earl sang a few songs. After a couple of hours of playing, everybody ate at a long table, laden with potluck food. All along the sides of the room were old pictures of the depot, articles from the local paper of history that touched the community...

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Bloomington, Ind.

Traditional Arts Indiana
A Partnership of Indiana University
and the Indiana Arts Commission
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